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ABSTRACT

The immediate purpose of this consultation paper is to plan for a proposed seminar or seminars which would offer training to personnel concerned with the development of population education and its introduction in education systems. Some aspects of the broader setting for this training are briefly sketched, such as: a) the formal actions taken by the various United Nations agencies indicating the programs and services available in population and family planning; and, b) ways in which Unesco's role in educational systems in population/family planning differs from Unesco's work in other areas. A number of problems need to be considered: 1) definition and delineation of population education; 2) problems of curriculum development; 3) instructional materials and aids; 4) teacher education; 5) training of leadership personnel; and, 6) evaluation. In considering possible answers to these problem areas, the meeting may be in a position to provide guidance not only on specific matters such as objectives, content and scope of the proposed training courses, but also on the wider overall program of action into which the course should fit. (Author/JLB)

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WORKING PAPER ON SCHOOL EDUCATION ON POPULATION QUESTIONS: BACKGROUND AND MAJOR ISSUES

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INTRODUCTION

The immediate purpose of the present Consultation is to plan for a proposed Seminar or Seminars which would offer training to personnel concerned with the development of population education and its introduction in education systems. In considering this quite specific question, it is no doubt pertinent to give some attention to certain broader matters which provide the setting for such training, and this paper therefore attempts to sketch these briefly.

SETTING OF THE PROBLEM

A. In a number of countries which have instituted official national programmes to reduce the rate of population growth, assistance from UN agencies is being requested to aid in various aspects of these programmes. Since short-term solutions to the population problems are not available, increasing interest is being shown in activities which will make contributions to the long-term solution of these problems. In this context, the education systems have a special rôle to play in making each new generation aware of the significance of population problems and in preparing young people for responsible actions in planning their families when they are adults.

The various UN agencies have taken formal action to make clear to Member States the programmes and services which are available in the area of population and family planning. At the General Conference of Unesco in October-November 1968, a resolution was passed dealing with this area. The following sections of that resolution are noted here because of their immediate relevance for this Meeting:

"The General Conference ...

Conscious of the need for including instruction on population questions in school courses, of expanding the opportunities for training of teachers and communication personnel in this field, ... stressing the necessity that all

these forms of instruction should lay special emphasis on the socio-cultural implications of these activities,

Noting with satisfaction that, in 1969-1970, assistance will be given to Member States, at their request, under the Programme of Participation in Member States' Activities, in planning and conducting their activities in the fields of population and family planning ...

1. Declares that the purpose of Unesco's activities in the field of population should be to promote a better understanding of the serious responsibilities which population growth imposes on individuals, nations and the whole international community, in the context of respect for human rights, the people's ethical convictions, the needs of Member States for development, and the promotion of international co-operation,

2. Considers, therefore, that Unesco should act with due regard to the diversity of national situations and thus avoid any tendency to adopt uniform policies and procedures in regard to population policy and family planning,

3. Invites the Director-General:

   (a) to further co-operation with other international governmental or non-governmental organizations by offering the services of Unesco within the fields of population and family planning, with special emphasis on the socio-cultural implications thereof,

   (b) to avoid any overlapping activities with other United Nations bodies,

4. Authorizes the Director-General to receive from Member States and the appropriate international organizations all possible voluntary aid in the form of specific financial contributions and the services of experts in Unesco's areas of work,

5. Invites the Director-General to continue his endeavour to render all possible assistance by Unesco to Member States in the fields of population and family planning which come within its competence,

6. Instructs the Director-General to prepare the Secretariat to meet in a co-ordinated manner the urgent demands from Member States within the fields of population and family planning:

   (a) within Education:

      (i) by helping in the development of teaching materials, curricula, teacher-training, adult education, women's education, community education, etc.

      (ii) by studying the possibilities of including an educational pilot project on family planning in the experimental literacy programme.

B. In the light of the above, it is of importance both to the Organization and to Member States to note that Unesco's rôle in educational systems in relation to the population and family planning field is in some ways substantially different from that faced in some other areas of Unesco's work in general and even in some of the other areas of concern in the population and family planning area. For example, the mission of Unesco in mass communication related to population and family planning involves the application of the considerable experience of Unesco in mass communication to specific problems of Member States. Mass communication programmes have already been initiated in a number of Member States with official family planning programmes, and so assistance may be rendered by Unesco to such States as well as to other States which are in the early stages of a population programme.

In the field of school education, neither Unesco or Member States have a body of experience on which to draw for the development of a programme. Many States have expressed interest in this area but have not yet embarked on such programmes. Two States, India and Iran, have initiated action within the past year and some other States are beginning to make plans. However, school education in population questions is a new emphasis for which no acceptable models are available for diffusion. The experience of developed countries is very limited in this area and so the typical patterns of technical assistance to developing countries do not apply in this instance.

There are a number of problems which this group of consultants will need to consider. These have been classified under seven headings in an effort to bring together closely related issues. An effort has been made to arrange these areas in a logical order. However, any classification of this type is arbitrary and conclusions in any one area of problems are in part contingent on the resolution of issues in the other problem areas.

PROBLEM AREAS

DEFINITION AND DELINEATION OF POPULATION EDUCATION

Since there are differences in approaches and conceptions in this area of instruction, an issue of high priority is the development of consensus on the nature and scope of this field. What are the principal objectives for school instruction in both short-term and long-term perspective? Can these objectives be formulated in terms which will apply generally or will these take quite different form in different countries? Should an effort be made to gain consensus on the terms or phrases to be used in referring to this field?

PROBLEMS OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

On the basis of the delineation of the field of population education and the statement of objectives, what are the types of educational experiences which are most likely to lead to the attainment of these objectives? Can these educational experiences be integrated into existing curricula or will it be necessary to introduce new subjects into education systems? At what age or school level should instruction begin? Should efforts be made to introduce the needed changes at different school levels at the same point in time or should these be introduced gradually? If the latter, what levels should receive priority atten-

tion? Should population education be considered as a new emphasis in existing subject areas or should it be located as a phase of some other new curriculum area such as family life education, health education, or sex education?

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND AIDS

The introduction of population education will require new instructional materials and teaching aids. Can materials be developed for use in different countries with minor adaptations or will it be necessary for each country to develop its own materials? What type of prototype materials are likely to be the most useful? How much need is there for a clearing-house for instructional materials developed by different countries and by special groups? What type of technical assistance are countries likely to need in the development of instructional materials? What rôle should be played in the development of instructional materials by government agencies responsible for the promotion of family planning.

TEACHER EDUCATION

Any change in the curriculum poses a special problem for both those teachers who are now in service as well as for those who are being currently trained. What kinds of changes will be needed in the curricula of teacher training institutions? Will different approaches have to be used for pre-service education of teachers at the primary and the secondary levels? In the introduction of a population education programme, should highest priority be given to teacher education? Should special instructional materials be developed for this group including special materials for those teachers now in service? Should teachers be prepared to serve a community leadership rôle in addition to their classroom responsibilities?

TRAINING OF LEADERSHIP PERSONNEL

Since this is a new field, each country will be faced with a serious problem of providing competent leadership. How can the recruitment and training of such personnel be facilitated? Should the training take place within the country, in regional centres, or at an international centre? Should new training sites be developed or can the training be provided on contract with existing educational institutions? Should plans be made for special training programmes for administrators, leaders in teacher education, curriculum specialists, materials specialists, and other types of specialists? What priority should be given to leadership training?

EVALUATION

Special problems of evaluation are presented by this new area of instruction. Should evaluation procedures be built into population education programmes at the outset or should this be postponed until some stability is reached in the programme? Should early attention be given to knowledge and attitude surveys among students to set some bench marks and to provide guidance to the curriculum development process? Should some special arrangement be made to provide for the sharing of experience among the leaders of population education in the different countries regardless of the level of sophistication of the evaluation procedures which are instituted?

CONCLUSION

The foregoing sketches some of the principal questions which bear on Unesco's rôle in population education in general, as well as, in particular, on the immediate purpose of this meeting. In considering possible answers to these questions, the meeting may therefore be in a position to provide guidance not only on specific matters such as the objectives, content and scope of the proposed training courses, their duration, and the level and type of participants, but also on the wider, overall programme of action into which the courses should fit and of which they would be an integral part.